



OSWALD J. SMITH
1889 - 1986

"Why should anyone hear the Gospel twice before everyone has heard it once?"

Although he was the long-time pastor of the large and influential Peoples Church in Toronto, Ontario, the name of Oswald J. Smith is most often associated with missions.

Born in 1889 in Ontario, at the age of sixteen he attended an evangelistic crusade held by R. A. Torrey and Charles Alexander, where he was saved. Two years later he began Bible College, eventually graduating from both college and seminary.

His burden for missions showed up early in life. He applied with a foreign missions board, but they turned him down because of concerns about poor health he had suffered throughout his childhood (a problem which he apparently overcame, since he later worked both in the backwoods of Canada and the mountains of Kentucky, then lived into his late nineties).

If he couldn't go as a missionary, he determined to start a church that would send out missionaries. In 1928 Smith started the Peoples Church, originally called the Cosmopolitan Tabernacle.

As a young man he had asked God to enable him to give more than he would ordinarily be able to give, and the blessings he experienced helped him institute faith promise missions giving. With this plan, churches have given multiplied millions to send the Gospel throughout the world.

He also established mission works to reach the northern parts of Canada, to reach Jews and to distribute tracts.

In addition to his pastoral and missions works, he wrote 1200 poems and hymn lyrics, over 200 of which were set to music.

His earthly work ended at his homegoing in 1986.

"The church that does not evangelize will fossilize." -- Oswald J. Smith

"You can't take it [money] with you but you can send it on ahead." -- Oswald J. Smith

"We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first." -- Oswald J. Smith